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## BAMBOCHE: THE VIOLIN PAINTER.

BY CHARLES G. LELAND.

The good artist, Nicholas Poussin, had labored long and patiently over his exquisite painting of "Arcadia" at his house in Rome, near Trinita della Monte. Line by line, shade by shade, it approached perfection. But day by day these efforts became rarer. It was only in the ever varying intercourse with men that he could sustain his inspiration, and of late the society of the artists and scholars who were wont at stated hours to surround him, had become monotonous and wearisome.

"*Pardieu!*" he exclaimed one evening, weariedly leaning back and throwing aside his brush. "This is becoming insupportable. The sketch, the outline, the body—is indeed mine! But the soul, the color, the life—whence shall I derive it?"

His reveries were broken by the distant music of a violin, which was quaintly, but wonderfully played. At times it seemed approaching the house, and would sound forth with a saucy familiarity, as if its invisible bearer was about to enter with a triumphal march, and then would suddenly retreat with a hurry-scurry, discordant vibration, as if the dogs had been set loose on it. For in the distance it indulged in a plaintive wail, and ere long would suddenly be heard almost under the window, quivering and starting as if the musician were in his soul, reeling with laughter, and at times bolting forth the queerest scraps of Flemish and Italian drinking songs, which reminded one of nothing so much as the intoxication of a *Kermesse*, and induced a suspicion that the inspiration of this wild musician was derived from a Bacchic source.

"It is strange," thought Poussin; "this is the third evening that this goblin fiddle has been heard around the house; and yet no one that I can learn, has seen the performer. Better music heard I never; stranger music, no man. It must be that the old fellow, since he answers none of the servants, desires speech with me alone. Let us try!"

With these words he advanced to the open casement, and stepping forth upon the terrace, cried with a loud voice:

"*Devil—APPEAR!*"

Scarcely had he uttered these words, ere there scrambled or almost tumbled down upon the terrace, from an overhanging tree, a form, which half induced Poussin to believe that the invocation uttered in jest, had been responded to in earnest. An odd little humpbacked man, clad in Flemish hose and doublet, stood before him, eyeing him with a fierce glance from over an enormous pair of "*matador*" mustachios, and beneath a "*jeutre a plumet*," whose belicose position added not a little to the ruffling, swaggering aspect of the owner.

"And who art thou, friend?" asked, in his mildest tones, Poussin.

"I am BAMBOCHE!" replied, with queer gravity, the little man, twisting up his moustache. "Bamboche the Great!—Bamboche the Illustrious—the Fiddling—THE NOBLE—THE FIGHTING!"

And drawing his bow in accompaniment over the violin, he sang, in a loud, wild scream,

"BAM—BO—OCHE!"

"And wilt thou play me again some of those

sweet airs which I heard yesterday evening?" inquired Poussin.

"It was for that I came," cried Bamboche. "Thou has waited for me, and knew it not. But I knew it—ha! ha! ha!—the work could not go on without little Bamboche—little devil Bamboche—mad little Bamboche!"

And with these flattering expressions, the violinist entered the atelier, and crowing and clattering like a chicken, began to look around. At times, flapping his arms like wings, he would stand on one leg, absorbed in admiration, before a painting. A stuffed cat in a corner attracted him wonderfully; so much, indeed, that he treated her to a short, but remarkably well-improvised serenade on the violin, accompanied with violent vocal mewings and feline spittings, nodding and winking oddly betimes to Poussin, in a manner imitating his perfect familiarity with the nature and nocturnal habits of this animal. Then, seizing a portfolio, he would shuffle out the engravings and sketches with incredible quickness, moving his arms, meanwhile, like the fore-legs of a turnspit cur when running rapidly; yelping and barking with delight as each met his eye.

"The crazy rogue is evidently fond of pictures," thought Poussin.

"Hey, Signor Bamboche!—dost thou know aught of Art? Canst thou paint?"

"Yea," replied Bamboche, drawing from his violin a long note, which of itself sounded wonderfully like an affirmative. "Yea, for the soul is mine, and, consequently, I can develop pictorially and plastically that which is acoustically and musically conceived. Music is the mamma of all pictures. The chant of the blessed angels mingled with the sweet, voluptuous voice of a white-throated beauty, and became incarnate in a picture of Raphael. But little Bamboche saw it this morning, and knew every note of the tune, and played it off at sight. But I missed two bars in the Virgin's blue drapery, and found afterwards that a hole had been sewed up in the canvass, and some fool had painted it sadly over. Bravo! bravo, Bamboche!"

Upon this he seized the palette and brushes of Poussin, and placing a clean canvass on an easel, drew up, and said, proudly,

"Now I will fiddle you a picture!"

And with this, seizing his violin, he ran confusedly over several symphonies, as if seeking a subject. At last he appeared to have struck the key; for assuming an irresistibly droll attitude, and winking and shrugging as if intoxicated, he half sang, half played, a ribald old Flemish street song:

"A priest went strolling through the land ;

Hey!—'twas in the May!

He caught a young nun by the hand.

Hey!—'twas in the May, they say,

Hey!—'twas in the May!"

At times, grasping the chalk, he would sketch the figure of a jovial Capuchin, wickedly pressing the hand of a pretty nun. In the background, but near the figures, appeared the outline of an old monastery, while about were scattered fragments of ruins. Whenever he paused, or appeared at a loss, he would seize the violin, and with a few bars readily revive the design as it grew dim in his mind. Soon he began, with light and hasty touches, to color the sketch. Now he played more frequently and delicately, introducing the quaintest variations on the original air as he shaded the countenances. And more than once, his touches corresponded so evidently and strik-

ingly with the notes preceding them, that Poussin, who was gifted with a good ear, as well as a quick appreciation of mathematical proportion, could not resist a rapidly-increasing impression that the painting was a literal transcript of the music. As he gazed, the strange feeling grew upon him, that by any one who had once mastered this language of musical and optical harmony, the picture, with all its variations, might be as readily played back again on the violin, as it was now painted from its music.

"I have heard," thought he, "that if sand be laid lightly and sparsely on a thin sheet of glass, the vibration of a lute or violin will cause it to fly hither and thither, yet ever arranging itself at every perfect note into a symmetrical and beautiful form. How strange it seemeth! What if that which to us unthinking mortals appeareth so wild, fantastic, and evanescent—the music of the wind-harp, or the soft, sad wail of the evening breeze—should be capable of impressing its form and corresponding image on the material? Truly there be men, yea, and poets too, on whose souls, as on the unconscious glass, Nature by her music doth quaintly and sweetly shape from a few sands of learning, the most delicate and dainty devices. Of such a texture must be the soul of this wild one who thus sports with the deep mysteries of Art. And thus I feel that all things mirror each other, and that all are reflected and made permanent in One."

"For over the green world, far and wide,

By the foaming sea—on the mountain side;

Wherein soul or in form a thought hath been,

A spirit immortal in God is seen."

"And thus, Signor Poussin," exclaimed Bamboche, "I have set forth to you the musical *signatura rerum* of which I, the moustachioed, am a pictorial apostle. Nor in pictures alone do I thus translate,—having written off and played the entire Cathedral of Milan in E minor! And faces!—oh, faces!—I have set the face of the gray horseman,—the lying gray horseman,—the foolish gray horseman,—Wouvermanns,—to music; and, as I expected, it was a most scurvy ballad,—a filthy tune, not fit for the sweeps!"

"But," he continued, after a pause, "it was not for that I came. No! it was to play a soft and gentle air,—a sweet air of ancient Arcady. For thy picture must be finished, and *will* be finished, and go forth to the world, the fairest, gentlest portrayal of the old sylvan time that man hath ever beheld. 'ET IN ARCADIA EGO'—Bamboche is a great fiddler;—his notes are pence, and he gives them away in charity."

With this, the little man, motioning his host to a seat, began on his instrument a series of gentle, half-melancholy airs, which awoke in the mind of Poussin an ecstasy of inspiration. Softer and softer they died away, and awoke again in merry, dancing measures, which still bore the impress of sadness, as if Memory were recalling the pleasant hours of youth. A wild transition, and his soul was with the good and kind, long passed away. From distant mountain and shady shore came, borne on the wings of the night wind, the sad burden:—"We return no more. We have lived and loved, and our life was beautiful. We, too, were once dwellers on sunny Arcadie." And as the sounds grew ever sadder and sweeter, Poussin, the great artist, buried his face in his hands, and gave way to a flood of tears. Still sadder and softer grew the strains,—softer,—softer,—and died away.

When Poussin raised his head, the strange, wild visitor had disappeared. But the spirit of music and artistic inspiration seemed even yet to linger, like a dying perfume, in the apartment.

"And now," exclaimed Poussin, "thanks to thee, wild musician, I can finish my *Arcady* in the spirit in which it was first conceived.—*Sartain's Union Magazine*.

**ARISTIDES.**—A tragedy by Eschylus was once represented before the Athenians, in which it was said of one of the characters, "that he cared more to be just than to appear so." At these words, all eyes were instantly turned upon Aristides, as the man, who, of all the Greeks, most merited that distinguished character. Ever after he received, by universal consent, the surname of the Just, a title, says Plutarch, truly royal, or rather truly divine. This remarkable distinction roused envy, and envy prevailed so far as to procure his banishment for ten years, upon the unjust suspicion that his influence with the people was dangerous to their freedom. When the sentence was passed by his countrymen, Aristides himself was present in the midst of them, and a stranger who stood near and could not write, applied to him to write for him in his shell.

"What name?" asked the philosopher.

"Aristides," replied the stranger.

"Do you know him, then?" said Aristides, "or has he in any way injured you?"

"Neither," said the other; "but it is for this very thing I would he were condemned. I can go nowhere but I hear of Aristides the Just."

Aristides inquired no further, but took the shell and wrote his name in it as desired.

From the Musical World.

#### MR. ALFRED MELLON'S CONCERTS.

The season—an unprecedentedly long one—was brought to a conclusion on Saturday evening with a performance for Mr. Mellon's benefit. The programme, shaped to suit many tastes, was unusually rich and varied, and the artists comprised all all those vocal and instrumental favorites who, for the last few weeks, had been exhibiting their talents, under the "presidence" of Mr. Alfred Mellon, to the public. Enough of the performances to say that the important pieces were Beethoven's symphony in F, No. 8; Overture to *Son and Stanger* (Mendelssohn); Overture to *Jessonda* (Sophr); Concertino in E flat, for clarinet and orchestra (Weber), Mr. Maycock soloist; performances on piano-forte, violin, and double-bass by Mlle. Mariot de Beauvoisin, Master Emile Sauret, and Signor Bottesini; and vocal pieces by Mlle. Liebhart, Miss Emily Lonsdale, and Signor Foli.

In the course of the evening the following address was distributed throughout the house:—

"LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.—Having arrived at the ninety-six and last night of my present series of concerts, I embrace the opportunity of thanking you and the public generally for the liberal support and patronage with which I have been honored. Your continued kindness has induced and emboldened me to undertake the production of a new Grand Christmas Pantomime in this theatre, which, I trust, will be found to equal, if not surpass, in splendor and magnificence the famed productions of past seasons. No effort of mine will be wanting to enhance the reputation this theatre enjoys for such a class of performance, and I hope that, should I succeed in producing the usual Christmas entertainment to your satisfaction, you will extend to me that favor I have hitherto been honored in receiving. In acknow-

ledging the kind and generous support I have for many years received at your hands, and by which I have been enabled at my sole risk and personal responsibility to carry on the concerts for the past six years, I trust I may be permitted to solicit an extension of your kind patronage to my new venture in theatrical management. Permit me, then, most respectfully, to bid you farewell, and to indulge the hope that I may anticipate the pleasure of a renewal of our acquaintance on Boxing-night, December 26th.

ALFRED MELLON."

"*Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, November 24th, 1866.*"

The audience, a crowded and brilliant one, cheered Mr. Alfred Mellon lustily at the end.

#### MUSICAL GOSSIP.

R. Reece and G. B. Alten purpose an operetta for England's provincial towns, which is designed for three female singers only, and Miss Susan Galton will be first lady in that very novel operatic performance.

A new candidate for vocal celebrity has recently appeared in Monmouthshire, called Miss Clarke, and great praise is lavished upon her there.

Mme. Rudersdoff is touring in Germany, and in a grand concert at Cologne, under F. Hiller's direction, she is declared to have excelled herself.

Laura Harris sang last month in Hall's "Gentlemen's" concert, in Manchester.

Mme. Gassier, so well celebrated in this country for her brilliant vocalization, died last month at Madrid.

Charles Horsley directed a grand concert in Melbourne's magnificent new hall, to inaugurate the International Exhibition there. His new Exhibition "March" received loud applause, pushed to a repeat. Mendelssohn's "Lobesang" was done then in good style and with great success, the soloists being Misses Watson and Liddle and Mr. Donaldson.

That cane presentation story about Wagner is emphatically denied in Munich.

Report now comes from Leipsic that Abert's "Astorga" pleased that public greatly, but the critics deemed it undeserving its preceding reputation.

Vienna's two concerts to benefit war sufferers produced 7,000 florins. Rumor asserts that Vienna's Imperial Theatre will, like that of Paris, be leased to individuals, and not carried on by government, its expenses being too great for Austrian financial arrangements just now. *On dit*, Salvi is terribly annoyed with De Murska's demand of 18,000 florins salary, with excessive leaves of absence, beside refusal to contribute like other vocal artists.

"L'Africaine" had great success at Florence after "La Pergola" management put their price of tickets back to old standards, the *mise en scene* and costumes being magnificent, and excellent principals, double band and chorus, to make it go well.

The Sacred Harmonic Society of London makes a good show by annual reports: its receipts last year being reported at £5,838, and the expenses at £5,285. The subscriptions were £1,912, a much larger amount than in any former season, and its property is valued at £9,000, beside

nearly £8,000 subscribed to its Provident Fund. James Coward, who plays that immense choir organ in Sydenham Palace, replaces Brown-smith as organist. In that society's first concert this season, Mme. Lemmens-Sherrington, Mrs. Sydney Smith, Miss Julia Elton, Reeves, Lyall and Lewis Thomas, were principals.

Miss Berry Greening seems to have tickled Scotch ears, in Edinburgh concerts, very pungently with broad Scotch and good singing of "Auld Robin Gray." They were so intensely delighted thereby as to call for her again this month in variations upon "Cherry Ripe."

Altingham's new Lecture Hall was inaugurated last month with a grand concert, under Chas. Halle's direction, in which he, Mr. Carrodus, violinist, Miss Banks and Laura Baxter made great success. "The Harmonious Blacksmith," by Halle alone, received an encore, he playing it with grand variations.

*L'Independence Belge* tells big stories about one Zoni, who is asserted to imitate with his voice nearly all instruments perfectly, and make several heard at the same time, like an orchestra.

Dr. Wylde comes back to London from his Italian tour, fully stocked with ancient music for his Gresham lectures.

Linus Marterelli created a furore in Jullien's Dublin Exhibition concerts, with "Voi che sapete," beside trifles in catch music.

The attendance upon the recent Norwich festival foots up 8,361, against 8,111 in '63, and 7,837 in '60. Similar comparison of gross receipts gave £4,755 this year, against £4,380 in '63, and £4,450 in '60. The Grand Ball produced £620, or £235 beyond that in '63. The semi-royal visit cost nearly £700 extra, however, and the surplus for charity will, therefore, not exceed £1,000. In '63 it was £1,200.

The Crystal Palace concerts attract close observation now from critics, who find in the crowds that attend and heartily applaud Manns' grand orchestra, and the excellent vocal or instrumental accessories there provided for admiring dilettanti, abundant confirmation of their strongest eulogisms upon them. Manns shrewdly propitiated critical opinion, by increasing his stringed band largely, so that now he shows 16 double basses, 16 cellos, 30 violins, and 10 violas in orchestra.

Mlle. Mallenger, who stirred up Munich so powerfully with her "Norma" recently, is a Croat, and was vocally trained by Levi of Vienna. The Philharmonic of that city began its concerts October 28, when Mlle. Schoenchen sang, with immense success, melodies by Schubert, Marschner, Wullner, and Gounod's sweet little Serenade. Bennat, a violoncellist, had great estimation there in a caprice on Swedish Airs, written by himself.

Hans de Bulow gives nice soirees now at Bale, and will remain there all winter.

*On dit*, Barcelona's "Lilce" was made exceedingly glad by a performance of "Don Giovanni" last month, and Boccolini as the Don had a very great success. They branched out there upon that success, with "Masaniello" and "Zampa," which latter is *promised* to New York.

The London *Musical World's* Paris correspond-